Commitment to Buy Green

Green Purchasing Guide

GREENING GREATER TORONTO

October 2011

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1 OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

Making purchasing decisions with environmental impact in mind can lead to dramatic environmental improvements while delivering considerable cost savings. The green procurement process is part of a broader value chain and life cycle approach that takes into account an organization's activities, from sourcing, to operation and maintenance, to disposal. This Guide is a resource for any organization looking to green its purchasing processes, whether they are in the initial stages of incorporating environmental considerations into decision-making, or have already taken great strides towards improving their procurement practices. Case Studies and Tools contributed from public and private sector organizations of all sizes provide the foundation of this Guide.

As more organizations tackle environmental issues and challenges through their purchasing, best practices emerge and evolve. There is great opportunity in building on each other's successes and solutions, and we encourage organizations to contribute their own experiences and case studies to continually improve this resource.

WHAT IS GREEN PROCUREMENT?

For the purposes of this Guide, 'green procurement' is considered the selection and acquisition of products and services that most effectively minimize negative environmental impacts over their life cycle of manufacturing, transportation, use and, ultimately, recycling or disposal. Though organizations' definitions of green procurement may vary, green procurement or greening procurement signifies a shift away from goods and services that negatively impact the environment towards those that are more environmentally sound.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Guide was developed by a working group convened by CivicAction's Greening Greater Toronto and its Green Procurement Leadership Council, with contributions by staff member Carolyn DuBois and volunteer Shannon White. Members of this group collectively represent a wealth of experience and resources drawn from their own efforts to leverage their purchasing practices with environmental considerations in mind. The working group members are representatives from the following organizations: BMO Financial Group, CIBC, the Clean Air Partnership, Ernst and Young LLP, KPMG LLP, Ontario Lottery and Gaming, Ontario Power Authority, Ontario Power Generation, RBC Royal Bank, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Stikeman Elliott LLP, Supply Chain Management Canada, Sears Canada, TD Financial, Toronto Hydro, the Toronto Transit Commission and Unisource Canada Inc.

Greening Greater Toronto's green procurement activities have been supported by the Conservation Fund of the Ontario Power Authority, which provides support for new and innovative electricity conservation initiatives that build the ability of Ontario's residents, businesses, and institutions to reduce their demand for electricity.

The opinions, findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this guide reflect the views of Greening Greater Toronto and members of its Green Procurement Leadership Council, and do not necessarily represent the individual views of the contributing organizations.

ABOUT GREENING GREATER TORONTO

Greening Greater Toronto (www.greeninggreatertoronto.ca) is an initiative of CivicAction (www.civicaction.ca), a coalition of thousands of civic leaders who develop and launch solutions to pressing social and economic challenges in the Toronto region. More than 200 partners from corporations, industry, government, and the non-profit sector have joined the Greening Greater Toronto initiative. They and others are engaged in programs to support the vision of a flourishing region through environmental action and innovation, including: driving adoption of energy efficiency measures in Toronto region office buildings; investing in community emission reduction projects; and leveraging organizations' purchasing decisions to reduce environmental impact.

2 WHY GREEN PROCUREMENT?

Green procurement creates a "shared value" that enhances the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities which is operates. It has become a business imperative that provides many benefits, including:

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Implementing a green purchasing strategy demonstrates good environmental stewardship and a commitment to meeting local and global environmental objectives such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, protecting air, soil and waterways from harmful pollutants, and using resources sustainably. Implementing a green procurement program also ensures organizations are prepared to meet current and future environmental regulations or legislation.

COST REDUCTION

A major hurdle to overcome in organizations is the perception that green purchasing practices cost more, when in reality, switching to greener products or services can generate savings or be revenue neutral. Though price premiums do exist for some green products and services, a strong business case can often be made using full cost accounting. For instance green products often have lower total cost of ownership due to reduced costs associated with operation (e.g. energy and water use) maintenance, replacement (due to higher durability), disposal and environmental compliance.

RISK REDUCTION

Risk reduction is an incentive for organizations to purchase green. By buying greener products or services, organizations can avoid risks—which often translate into financial costs or losses—associated with: purchasing a problem (e.g. products which contain toxic chemicals); purchasing an offensive product (e.g. paper sourced from illegal logging practices); reputational risks associated with working with suppliers who have poor environmental track records (e.g. local pollution); supply chain disruptions (e.g. noncompliance with environmental regulations).

REVENUE GROWTH

Improving the environmental sustainability of your organization's purchasing decisions inevitably greens the products and services you offer. By delivering eco-friendly products/services that reflect customer values, organizations can satisfy stakeholder demands, enhance brand image, gain an edge over competitors, and improve customer loyalty and satisfaction.

SOFT IMPACTS

Many benefits of green purchasing are quick and visible, such as reduced waste. However, other, equally significant impacts are by nature less tangible because they occur gradually or perhaps are more difficult to quantify. These 'soft effects' can include increased environmental awareness and engagement amongst employees, suppliers, and stakeholders with positive impacts on efficiency and brand image.

3 HOW TO FORMALIZE YOUR GREEN PROCUREMENT EFFORTS

Many organizations recognize the benefits of greening procurement but are unsure how to formalize and implement their efforts. The remainder of this guide draws on the experience of professionals who have faced and overcome the challenges of developing and implementing a green procurement strategy. Given each organization is unique, no one approach fits all organizations. The following sections, as well as the case studies and tools referenced, can help guide this process.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

The following criteria help green procurement practices take hold and become part of how an organization operates:

- **Direction from the top:** For green procurement programs to be effective, organizations should embed sustainability in their key principles, including the procurement and supply chain. To make this happen, senior management, such as the CEO or head of procurement, must be onboard.
- **Commitment to green procurement in organizational policy and/or expressed in other documents:** For many organizations, a formal green procurement policy makes sense as it gives rigour and ensures continuity; however, this commitment can be written in the form of guidelines or standards which support a corporate environmental policy, and can be detailed or more directional in nature, depending on how prescriptive the organization wants to be. Your organization may or may not have environmental policies that apply to greening procurement practices. If such policies exist, they can be used to drive green procurement forward. If not, consider formalizing your organization´s commitment by: including a green procurement clause in existing policy; developing a stand-alone green procurement commitment document; or signing external green procurement pledges such as the Commitment to Buy Green or the Clean Air Partnership.
- **A clear and formal strategy for greening procurement:** A strategy document ensures that your organization´s commitment to greening procurement is made operational. A green procurement strategy document will likely and necessarily evolve over time. The key tenets to include in a strategy document are outlined below.
- **Green procurement strategy is embedded within existing sourcing procedures:** To be effective, your green procurement strategy must be embedded within existing sourcing procedures and understood by those making purchasing decisions. The inclusion of environmental criteria within supplier evaluation processes requires clear communication and strong inter-departmental collaboration.
- **Supplier engagement:** It is important to clearly communicate your organization´s commitment to greening procurement to suppliers, and provide opportunities for them to adapt their processes to align with your organization´s environmental values.

DEVELOPING A GREEN PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

One of the first steps in institutionalizing the practice of green purchasing is developing a green procurement strategy document. Organizations will approach this differently.

Getting Started

In many cases, organizations choose to convene a group of people from different departments with a range of expertise to move this forward. Before beginning to develop the green procurement strategy, this group may be charged with the following tasks:

- **Review relevant policies and commitments:** As mentioned, some organizations will have already made commitments to include environmental considerations when making purchasing decisions and so the first step will be to conduct a review of existing relevant commitments and determine how to incorporate these into a broader and perhaps more ambitious green procurement strategy.

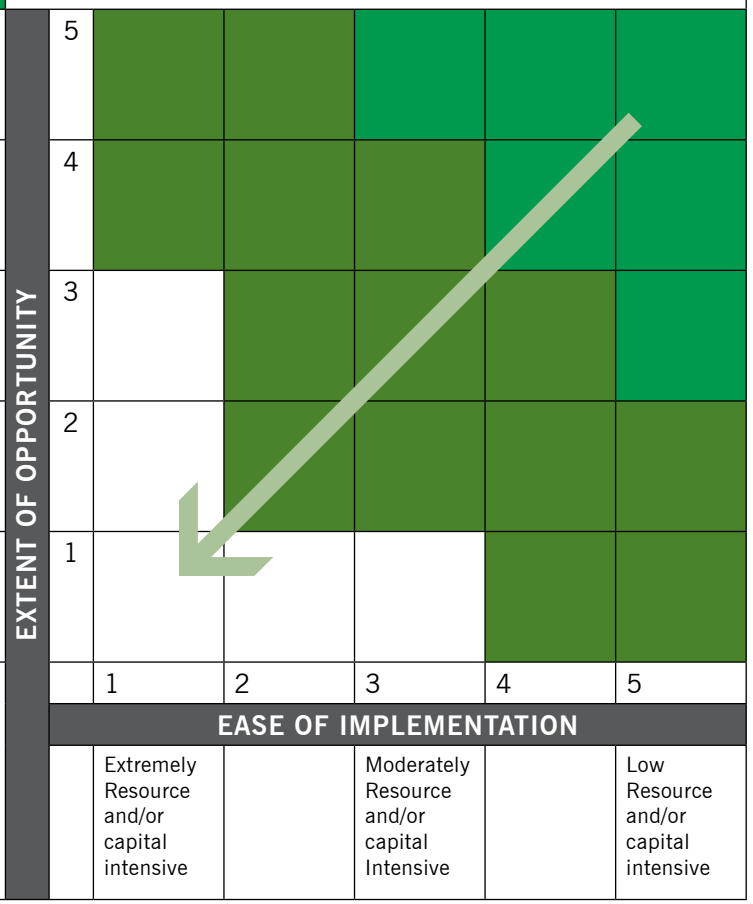
- **Take stock of purchases and their environmental impacts:** Determine the relative impact of the products and services your organization purchases. Though there are benefits to having a detailed understanding of the nature and scale of these impacts, begin with a rough idea of which products have the greatest impacts and consider whether these impacts can be avoided.
- **Determine which buy areas to focus on:** Greening procurement is a process of continuous improvement. It is not necessary or expected that organizations tackle all buy areas at once. Many organizations begin by targeting certain buy areas, and expand the scope of application over time. For example organizations may want to focus initially on easy gains to build momentum (e.g. areas that have existing standards such as Energy Star or EPEATS, areas that generate positive financial returns, or have high environmental impacts). Consider using a heat map to prioritize the buy areas based on criteria such as how easy it will be to implement (resources, cost etc.) and potential gains (nature of the product, cost, brand).

Using a heat map

To determine the extent of opportunity, decide what criteria you wish to consider (such as health and safety, brand, finance, environment and/or regulations). Characterize the impact associated for each with levels from 1 to 5. Typically, levels 1, 3 and 5 are assigned definitions, while 2 and 4 are considered intuitive. For example, when rating financial criteria a company may define 1 = <50K, 3 = <250K and 5 = 500k (per annum), and environment could be 1 = no impact, 3 = temporary positive impact, or moderate impact, and 5 = long term or significant positive impact . All criteria definitions should be scaled appropriately to each individual company. Thus, if you have an easily implemented, high opportunity situation this would score a 5 x 5 and be in the upper right of the matrix – the colour coding is a means of distinguishing low, medium and low priorities. Once all of the opportunities have been evaluated in terms of ease and opportunity plot them on a 5 x 5 heat map. This will again show the relative priority and feed into the implementation strategy.

HEAT MAP

Health & Safety	Environment	Brand	Financial
Long term, significant			
Moderate/temporary			
Minor impact			
No impact			



What to Include in the Strategy Document

There are a number of ways to document your organization´s green procurement strategy. Depending on the structure of an organization, the green procurement strategy may exist within policy documents, statements or organizational guidelines and standards. Whatever the case, this section suggests a framework which can help your organization articulate its green procurement strategy.

Guiding Statement

The keystone of a green procurement strategy is a guiding statement, which may stand alone or link to an organization's broader environmental or corporate governance.

Background

This section should outline the general purpose and features of the green procurement strategy, what it will accomplish and how it ties into your organization's environmental values and commitments. This section should also detail the process by which the green procurement strategy was developed, who was involved in developing its contents, how it will be implemented and renewed, and provide definitions for important terms used throughout the document such as 'green' or 'environmentally sustainable purchasing'.

Benefits for greening procurement

This section should outline the benefits of greening your organization´s procurement practices. In addition to the benefits outlined above (Why Green Procurement), your organization may reference the following:

- Enables your organization to meet its environmental targets
- Reduces costs
- Enacts a broader organizational strategy or guideline within procurement
- Manages or mitigates reputational or regulatory risks
- Demonstrates the priorities of the organization
- Cultivates a positive brand with employees and customers
- Helps achieve particular targets set by the organization
- Helps align with suppliers and customers

Scope

This section delineates the scope of the commitment (to whom and what it applies). Answering the following questions can help to define the scope.

- Who/what group is the Policy intended for? Does it apply to those business and functional groups with responsibilities for the procurement of goods and services? All employees? External service providers acting on behalf of the organization?
- Which people, geographies, functions are covered?
- Which spend categories are included (products, commodities, services)?
- What size of purchases are included and how will this be judged?
- What depth in the supply chain is included- which tiers of suppliers (based on risk, size, materiality), and how much obligation extends to suppliers to evaluate their own practices?
- What scope of supplier practices are included - product manufacturing procured service-related activities or the enterprise-wide activities?

Environmental attributes of products and services

This section defines what environmental characteristics your organization will consider when purchasing products and services and should describe what preferences will be given. For example, your organization may give preference to suppliers that can provide products or services with the following environmental attributes:

- **Energy efficiency:** Demonstrate energy efficiency, by meeting Energy Star guidelines, or equivalent
- **Efficient use of natural resources in the design of the product:** Use recycled or reclaimed parts, and reduce packaging and product waste.
- **Sustainable life cycle:** Sustainable/long service-life and/or can be economically and effectively repaired or upgraded.
- **Minimal Hazardous Substances:** Reduce polluting by-products and/or safety hazards during use or disposal.
- **End of Life concerns:** Preferences for suppliers that take back the product, and ensure that it is disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner.
- **Supplier location and/or delivery method:** To reduce emissions associated with transportation, where possible, preference will be given to local suppliers or suppliers who offer coordinated deliveries.
- **Supplier's environmental commitments:** An organization may want to align their suppliers with the same level of environmental commitment they have chosen. For example, they may have preferences for suppliers who have an environmental management system (e.g. ISO 14001); or they may prefer suppliers that have/maintain an Environmental Policy. They also may want to give preferences to suppliers that can help the organization reduce their significant environmental aspects (e.g. reduce paper and energy use). Note that this may be particularly relevant when assessing service providers.

Implementation

The implementation section of a green procurement strategy document describes how the policy will be executed. It will outline, for example, processes during the pre-selection (RFP stage), post-selection (assigning contractual language specific to environment), and/or through ongoing vendor management (through active engagement with the supplier). During the RFP stage, the organization describes how it will evaluate suppliers.

For example, an organization may use an evaluation form or questionnaire and would need to describe the weight the environmental score will have against the total RFP evaluation. Note that this may differ depending on whether it is a product or service, and on the level of environmental risk

Governance and Ongoing Stewardship

This is a short section to describe the key audiences for an organization's strategic document, as well as who is responsible and accountable for reviewing and implementing the plan. Specifically, this section should include:

- Who owns the document
- Who is the subject matter expert
- Who is responsible for execution
- How often will it be reviewed
- How it will be communicated and to whom and
- How the results will be measured and verified, and by whom

Appendices

The appendices of the green procurement strategy should include any additional documentation that may be required by the reader. Consider including relevant excerpts from organizational policy documents, environmental sustainability reports as well as any documentation (such as the environmental questionnaire and environmental standards) used in the supplier evaluation process.

4 EVALUATING SUPPLIERS

ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Many organizations ask potential vendors to complete a questionnaire to describe the environmental impacts associated with their products or services. The environmental questionnaire may be part of the pre-approval process or included as part of an Expression of Interest (EOI) or Request for Proposal (RFP). The types of questions included in the questionnaire should be aligned with the organization's green procurement objectives.

Typically, organizations ask their suppliers whether they have environmental policies or environmental management systems in place including programs to mitigate environmental risk and cost. You may also wish to inquire about the level of environmental disclosure (e.g. report publicly, report based on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), report annually to the Carbon Disclosure Project). Product-specific questionnaires should also include a series of questions pertaining to the environmental impacts of the product itself, ideally over its entire life span.

Before developing the questionnaire, an organization should have a clear sense of how they will use the additional information collected in the questionnaire in the process of selecting suppliers. If the environmental questionnaire is part of the RFP, this process may include awarding points for environmental attributes as part of the overall scoring system. The weighting/scoring of each question will vary, based on how important it is to the organization. For instance, higher weights/scores are often assigned to questions relating to the greatest environmental risks or costs. Whatever process is used, it should be objective and repeatable using quantifiable criteria to the extent possible. For instance, unless the evaluator is the subject expert on environmental matters, it helps to collect Yes/No responses where possible.

TIP

Recognize the effort it will take the supplier to complete the survey, and clearly communicate your reasons for asking them to do this and how their responses will be used in the selection process.

Some aspects your organization may wish to include in your evaluation/questionnaire include:

- Supplier's environmental practices
- Environmental policy/commitments
- Environmental management
- Employment programs (e.g. energy use/greenhouse gas emissions, waste reduction, hazardous waste management)
- Reporting

Environmental Attributes in the Supplier's Product (examples):

- Energy efficient
- Produced from recycled materials
- Designed for disassembly and/or recycling
- Contains no/minimal hazardous substances
- Minimal packaging/packaging made from recyclable materials
- Is the product reusable or recyclable?
- Does this product reduce waste and make efficient use of resources (e.g. energy and raw materials)?
- Are there any special disposal requirements?
- Is the use of the product free from any emissions to air or water that may have an adverse environmental effect?
- Has the product been certified by an independent accredited organization (e.g. Environmental Choice, Green Seal or Energy Star programs)?

REQUEST DOCUMENTATION TO VALIDATE CLAIMS

In some cases organizations may ask their suppliers to provide documentation to support information provided in the environmental questionnaire or elsewhere in the RFP process. Organizations may ask a supplier if they produce any public reports listing their environmental programs and commitments or whether they can provide policies or certifications (such as ISO 14000). For instance, if a supplier states they are carbon neutral, and reducing carbon emissions is among your organization´s central mandates, it may be necessary to verify this claim. Purchasers may also request that bidders present documentation from the product manufacturer.

Appropriate means of proof include a technical dossier from the manufacturer, a test report from a recognized body showing compliance, or a declaration from the manufacturer, such as the ECO Declaration. 'Recognized bodies' are test and calibration laboratories and certification and inspection bodies which comply with applicable regional, national and/or international standards.

ECOLABELS AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

Standards and Ecolabels bridge the gap between purchasing practitioners and environmental experts, allowing organizations to identify products and services with positive attributes. This said, some environmental certification schemes make false or ambiguous claims and the plethora of environmental certification schemes available can make it difficult for purchasers to distinguish credible standards from those that effectively 'greenwash' products and services.[1]

Environmental marketing claims should have the following attributes:

- Have qualifications and disclosures that are clear enough to prevent deception
- Make it clear whether the environmental attribute or benefit being asserted refers to the product, the product's package, or to a portion or component of the product or packaging
- Not overstate the environmental attribute or benefit, expressly or by implication
- Include a statement that makes the basis of comparison clear so that the consumer should be able to understand the claim

1 For guidance on standards see: http://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/02701.html **or** http://www.fivewinds.com/english/news-and-events/news/new-eco-labeling-guidelines-for-supply-chains-developed-with-support-from-five-winds.htm

5 MEASURING AND REPORTING

MEASURING PROGRESS

Amassing the information necessary to measure the success of an overall program or individual contracts, while often cumbersome, is well worth the effort. Measuring success allows the identification of both the environmental and cost-saving benefits of an organization's efforts. It also enables the identification of problem areas and allows an organization to meet reporting and record keeping requirements that may serve to justify the program. Below are simple steps for establishing a process to measure results identified by the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO).

Identify key performance criteria

As with any management system, good metrics are vital – they permit the determination of or extent to which objectives are being met. Metrics can be defined based on the desired goals: the number of new environmentally-based contracts to be issued, the types of recycled materials an organization may want to target, or a certain level of purchasing (dollars) to achieve.

Establish a baseline on which to measure progress

A baseline is a point of reference for performance comparison – e.g. an objective could be a 50% reduction of XYZ by the year (future) based on the baseline year of (past or current).

Track and document performance

Records of performance should be kept in accordance with records keeping practices – these practices should meet the attributes set forth in a variety of standards.

COMMUNICATE PROGRESS

Communicating the success of green procurement efforts can help garner employee support and engagement in an organization's green procurement program. Communicating progress to the public allows organizations to gain recognition for their leadership, often improving brand value. Communication channels may include: electronic newsletters; postings on intranet home page; environmental awareness blog; postings on Facebook, Twitter or other social networking websites; and reference in annual reports or executive speeches. When communicating your participation, consider highlighting tangible examples of how you have changed procurement practices and what impact it has had (i.e. amount of paper saved, electricity savings and other impacts), and offer opportunities for employees to get involved (for example ask for suggestions of where more improvements can be made).

6 GREEN PROCUREMENT IN PRACTICE

This section provides an overview of environmental concerns, questions and issues for a number of key purchase areas for companies.

PAPER

Many organizations use a significant amount of paper through a range of paper products used in the daily function and operations of the business. For example, each office worker in North America consumes an average of 10,000 sheets of paper each year. Paper products can include not only copy paper but envelopes, notebooks and even tissue and other bathroom supplies.

Environmental Concerns

The pulp and paper industry and its final products can impose large environmental impacts, as manufacturing paper products can be resource intensive resulting in deforestation, heavy water and energy use. Paper products may also require the use of toxic chemicals and packaging materials that often end up in landfills. With the environmental impact and pervasive use of paper, procuring paper products with a low environmental impact is imperative in reducing an organization's environmental footprint.

The Environmental Paper Network has developed a Paper Calculator tool to aid businesses in their efforts to reduce the harmful impacts of their paper use. This will quantify the benefits of better paper choices and show the environmental impacts of different paper types across their full lifecycle.

Minimizing Impact

Acquiring paper products with a low environmental impact often involves purchasing paper certified by a recognized standard or program. Certification standards developed by organizations such as Environmental Choice, Forest Stewardship Council, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Chlorine Free Products Association and Green Seal help ensure specific environmental features have been met. For example, a certification system can ensure:

- Virgin fibre was derived through sustainable forestry practices
- Paper products contain a minimum percentage of recycled material
- The presence of any added pigments, inks, and dyes is prohibited
- Reduced chlorinated bleaching
- Products are contained with minimal packaging
- Reduced toxicity in packaging
- Manufacturers measure and limit toxins in effluent waste

The above list contains examples of some of the criteria that may be required for a certified paper product. The criteria for certification will vary from one standard to the next. The quality of the certification schemes can change over time and in some cases has improved significantly with consumer and non-profit stakeholder input. Any serious evaluation of a certification scheme should involve the stated features of the certification program as well as its governance and implementation.

LOOK FOR PRODUCTS WITH THE FOLLOWING CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

Procurement Questions for Consideration

The following are questions that should be considered when procuring paper products:

- Are the products certified by a third party certification standard/program?
- Does the certification adhere to sustainable forestry practices?
- What is the percentage of recycled content post consumer and/or post industrial recycled material?
- Is there efficient or excessive packaging?
- Was the use of toxic chemicals considered/minimized in the production and packaging?

GREEN CLEANING PROGRAMMING

An organization's cleaning practices not only improve the aesthetic feel of their facilities, but also play an important role in improving indoor air quality and raising employee productivity. A proper green cleaning program should not only ensure cleaning materials are non-toxic, but also cover how the facility should be cleaned. By looking at these elements, organizations can protect the health of their employees without harming the environment.

Environmental Concerns

One of the biggest misconceptions is that cleaning products have to be toxic in order to work well; however, natural cleaning products are just as effective as conventional cleaning products. Given that many employees spend most of their time indoors, conventional cleaning products with their mix of carcinogens can impact indoor air quality and negatively impact the health and productivity of employees. A proper green cleaning program eliminates conventional cleaning products as well as introduces green cleaning practices, both of which when combined can improve indoor air quality and ensure the health of an organization's employees.

Minimizing the Impact

When it comes to selecting green cleaning products an organization should look for certification labels such as: Green Seal, Eco-Logo, Greenguard, US EPA Design for the Environment, Forest Stewardship Council, Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label Program. This ensures that products have met strict regulatory standards set by third party certifiers. An eco-label identifies overall environmental performance of a product or service within a specific product/service category based on life cycle considerations.

A green cleaning program though isn't complete without having the proper cleaning practices, thus an organization should not only ensure their cleaning service provider is utilizing green cleaning supplies, but also has strict policies around cleaning. To ensure a cleaning service provider is following management policies that ensure indoor air quality, look for cleaning service providers that utilize the Green Seal Environmental Standard for Green Cleaning (GS-42), the U.S. EPA's Indoor Air Quality Building Education and Assessment Model (I-BEAM) Housekeeping Program, or whose policies will qualify the building for LEED Indoor Air Quality Points. The organization INFORM also provides a Green Cleaning Toolkit on its website which includes fact sheets, best practices and environmentally preferable products.

The costs for implementing a green cleaning program for industrial and commercial users depends upon their activities and operations, but any price increase should be marginal. The operational costs of implementing a green cleaning program though are considerably less, because liabilities are not incurred and regulatory compliance is improved.

LOOK FOR PRODUCTS WITH THE FOLLOWING CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

Procurement Questions for Consideration

The following are questions that should be considered when procuring a green cleaning program:

- Does the cleaning service provider use cleaning products that are certified by Eco-Logo, Green Seal, Greenguard or the Green Label Program?
- Does the cleaning service provider have cleaning practices that conform to GS-42, I -BEAM's Housekeeping Program or LEED Indoor Air Quality requirements?
- Does your organization have a green cleaning policy that is periodically reviewed, updated and communicated to employees and cleaning staff?
- Does your organization provide ongoing training for your cleaning staff to ensure that they are meeting the client's green cleaning requirements?

OFFICE FURNITURE

Traditional office furniture requires a significant amount of natural resources and toxic chemicals to go from source to final product. Fortunately, the market to purchase eco-friendly furniture is expanding, as many companies offer furniture made from sustainably harvested resources, use finishes that are non-toxic and are manufactured locally.

Environmental Concerns

There are several environmental concerns for office furniture, including utilizing natural resources for construction, the use of finishes that emit harmful emissions both in manufacturing and end-use, as well as what to do with the furniture at the end if its life.

Minimizing the Impact

There are many ways to minimize the environmental impact associated with office furniture procurement:

- **Lease, rent or buy used:** If furniture is needed on a short term basis you may want to consider renting or leasing items. Furthermore, second-hand and vintage furniture requires no additional resources to manufacture and are often locally sourced.
- **Furniture made with recycled and reclaimed materials:** Recycled and reclaimed materials decrease demand for virgin materials, reduce waste and help support the market for recycled materials. Recycled content may include metal, plastics, pressboard and fabric. Reclaimed wood can come from older furniture, houses, flawed wood, or from scraps from a factory. The Rainforest Alliance has a Rediscovered Wood Certification system.
- **Certified sustainable furniture:** Procure furniture that would be accepted under Greenguard's Indoor Air Quality Certification program or ANSI/BIFMA Furniture Sustainability Certification Standard, "Level" which evaluates furniture's sustainability from multiple perspectives. For wood furniture specifically, prioritize products that have obtained third party certification such as those set by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). A sustainably managed forest will avoid clear cutting forests and maintain a forest's environmental services.
- **Bamboo:** Furniture produced using Bamboo is another way to decrease your environmental impact. Bamboo is fast-growing and can be grown with few to no pesticides. As it grows so rapidly, it is much easier to maintain healthy bamboo forests.
- **Low VOC:** Furniture with low VOC content may include those with powder-based finished coats (opposed to solvent based wet paints). These contain less or no VOC's, require less energy and create less waste. In addition, furniture that is untreated or treated with natural substances, like natural wood finishes, will help avoid negative effects to indoor air quality. Greenguard certifies products and materials, including furniture, for low chemical emissions.
- **Durability, Disassembly and Recyclability:** Buying durable high quality furniture contributes to a sustainability program as it will not have to be replaced as often as lower quality pieces. When furniture does breakdown, good eco-friendly furniture should be easy to repair, disassemble, and recycle. These products can be easily taken apart, sorted into their constituent parts, and recycled at the end of their useful lives. Look for McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry (MBDC) certification program, Cradle to Cradle (C2C) Certified Products.

LOOK FOR PRODUCTS WITH THE FOLLOWING CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

Procurement Questions for Consideration

The following are questions that should be considered when procuring office furniture:

- Has the furniture obtained environmental certification from ANSI/BIFMA, FSC or SFI?
- Is the furniture in accordance with Greenguard's Indoor Air Quality Certification program?
- Is the furniture in accordance with LEED Materials and Resources - Sustainable Purchases credits and LEED Indoor Air Quality requirements?

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

With declining prices and rapid advancements, the number of electronic devices in the workplace is increasing, and often requires frequent upgrading or replacement with newer models.

Environmental Concerns

There are a number of environmental concerns resulting from electronic equipment, including their use of non-renewable resources that have to be mined and processed, their use of electricity during their operation and how they are handled at the end of their life. In all of these phases, there is great potential for toxics to be released into the environment and impact society.

Minimizing the Impact

There are several ways to minimize the impact of electronic purchases:

- **Energy Efficiency:** Electronic equipment that has earned energy efficiency certifications through programs like ENERGY STAR will decrease operational energy use and save on energy bills without sacrificing the performance. Green-e Marketplace is a program that allows companies to display their logo when they have purchased a qualifying amount of renewable energy and passed verification standards. Below are some tools that can be used to calculate efficiencies, emissions reductions and cost savings:
  - > The Canadian ENERGY STAR Simple Savings Calculator is an interactive software tool designed to show volume buyers or procurement officials the direct economic and environmental benefits of purchasing an energy-efficient product.
  - > The EnerGuide for Industry offers comprehensive web-based information about the purchase, operation and maintenance of industrial equipment to help buyers select the most energy-efficient models.
  - > The Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) can also help institutional purchasers compare electronic products based on environmental performance. EPEAT registered computer products have reduced levels of cadmium, lead, and mercury and are easier to upgrade and recycle, in addition to meeting the government's Energy Star guidelines.
  - > The Low Carbon IT Savings Calculator, developed by US EPA and Department of Energy calculates cost savings and carbon reductions based on the type of computer purchased and the operation of computers (e.g. LCD vs. CRT, desktop vs. notebook, sleep mode settings vs. no settings etc.).
- **Rent or lease:** If a product is only needed for a short period of time (for corporate training, meetings or any other event) you may want to consider renting or leasing items (such as computers, AV and office equipment).
- **Recycle:** Almost 90% of the material contained in electronic equipment including common metals such as copper, aluminum and steel, as well as glass and plastics, can be recycled. Organizations should develop the capacity and knowledge to collect and properly dispose all electronic equipment. Ontario Electronic Stewardship is the Industry Funding Organization for the *Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Program Plan*. Under the program, 44 different products are eligible for diversion from landfill through a network of recycling and reuse partners. The program is used to recycle portable computers, computer peripherals, monitors, printers, fax machines, televisions, phones, cameras and audiovisual equipment. Consumers and businesses can find local collection locations for their electronic waste at www.recycleyourelectronics.ca.

LOOK FOR PRODUCTS WITH THE FOLLOWING CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

Procurement Questions for Consideration

The following are questions that should be considered when procuring electronic equipment:

- Does it comply with an environmental certification standard (such as Energy Star)?
- Is a purchase necessary or could it be rented or leased?
- Does the product contain fewer substances known to adversely affect human health and the environment?
- Can the product be upgraded, easily repaired and safely recycled?
- How will the vendor properly dispose of your used electronics so that data is protected and resources are reclaimed?

FOOD & CATERING

While there is a need for bringing food into events and business meetings, there are many options to reduce the environmental impact of catered events.

Environmental Concerns

Business events and meetings that offer food and beverages can impose significant environmental impacts. Catering services can involve a lot of transportation and can create a significant amount of waste. The source of food being served is also a factor in the overall environmental impact. If the food is not locally produced it may travel long distances before it reaches its destination, resulting in higher associated greenhouse gas emissions, and products that are not as fresh as their local counterparts. Meat based diets have been demonstrated to have higher negative environmental impacts than vegetable based diets. A menu based on local fruits and vegetables will have significant environmental benefits, as well as provide healthy options for your guests.

Minimizing the Impact

There are a number of ways to minimize the impact of catering services, including:

- Solicit a green catering company to serve conferences and meetings
- Purchase foods low in the food chain, such as fruits, vegetables, grains and nuts
- Purchase food and beverages that are local and/or organic (e.g. Organic Canada, USDA Organic)
- Provide tap water instead of bottled water and soft drinks
- Avoid unnecessary disposable items and use dishes, mugs, cutlery, linens that are re-usable
- Avoiding single-serve containers or condiments
- Compost and recycle all excess food onsite or through the green catering company
- Use recycled paper products and recycle everything after use – if your building recycling program doesn't accept these products, consider asking your caterer to dispose of these in the proper manner.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website provides further information on economically, socially and environmentally beneficial food waste management strategies for large and small scale generators.

LOOK FOR PRODUCTS WITH THE FOLLOWING CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

Procurement Questions for Consideration

The following are questions that should be considered when procuring food and catering:

- Is there a local green catering company in the area?
- Are there vegetarian options?
- Is there a system or option to compost excess food?
- Is there an option to use reusable eating utensils?
- Are paper products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council or Sustainable Forestry Initiative?
- Are all non-reusable products being properly recycled?

BUILDING ENVELOPE

The building envelope includes the physical components such as the heating and cooling systems, lighting, roof and walls, doors and windows, and management systems, all of which have an important role in maintaining occupant comfort and the building's use of resources.

Environmental Concerns

Buildings demand significant amounts of energy to meet various operational needs such as heating, ventilation, air conditioning, lighting, and telecommunications, all of which result in large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions.

Minimizing the Impact

There are a number of ways to minimize the impact of a building's operations, including:

- **Building energy audits**: Have the building inspected and analyzed to locate areas and work processes where energy can be utilized more efficiently and conserved without affecting outputs.
- **Request for Proposal (RFP)**: Ensure that suppliers who submit a proposal express how environmental considerations were taken into account and where efficiency improvements will be realized. When

developing the RFP it is important to request that products and services have environmental certifications or have been environmentally tested for efficiency, whether there are opportunities for financial incentives and subsidies and if the product/service is comparable to the most efficient specifications in their class (for example LED/ Fluorescent/CFL for lighting retrofits).

- **End-of-Life:** Using the procurement process, ensure that the vendor or contractor will properly dispose of any building systems that are removed in the most sustainable fashion as to avoid ending up in the landfill.

Procurement Questions for Consideration

The following are questions that should be considered when considering building envelope upgrades and/or retrofits:

- Have all areas of the building been analyzed and prioritized with regard to energy efficiency retrofits and process improvements?
- Have all incentive and financial assistance programs been evaluated and considered for the proposed upgrades?
- Has the organization demonstrated that products and services procured meet strict environmental standards for their class?
- Are the building systems that are going to be recycled and reclaimed done so in the most sustainable fashion to avoid being land filled?

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Commonly an organization will procure professional services to be performed by a contractor or consultant. These professional services, for example, may be provided by accountants, attorneys, business consultants and development managers, distributors, engineers, law firms, real estate brokers and web designers.

When soliciting a professional-service provider there are many ways to influence or choose a provider that promotes environmentally sustainable practices. There are certain characteristics of the service provider that can be considered when making a selection. Choosing those service providers that meet your environmental demands and follow environmentally sustainable practices will reward environmentally responsible providers, encourage individual providers to become more sustainable, and influence the market towards sustainable practices.

Environmental Concerns

There are various environmental impacts that a professional service provider can impose through its building operations and business practices. Impacts may include transportation emissions, energy and resource consumption, impacts from procurement decisions, indoor air quality deterioration and waste management impacts.

Minimizing the Impact

To help change the market and encourage sustainability in the professional services market, give preference to service providers that:

- **Have a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plan:** A CSR plan will ensure that an organization is responsible and transparent towards its actions not only on the environment but to their consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public.
- **Implement environmental management standards (EMS) (e.g. ISO 14000):** An EMS will help an organization continually improve its performance with respect to decreasing its negative impact on the environment and complying with relevant laws, regulations, and other environmental requirements.
- Are carbon neutral-organizations that purchase third-party validated renewable energy, energy efficiency and reforestation projects to offset their emissions and assist in the fight against climate change. They may also provide the option for the client to purchase an offset equivalent to the emissions produced through the service being provided.
- **Can provide customized service upon request:** The service provider, for example, can meet your environmental requirements outlined in the request for proposal.

Procurement Questions for Consideration

The following are questions that should be considered when considering professional services:

- Does the service provider have environmental policies or management systems in place?
- Is there transparency and action towards mitigating and offsetting their environmental impacts?
- Are the service providers flexible and able to meet your standards for environmental performance?
- Are there any negative allegations or criticisms against the service provider based on previous performance?

7 DEFINITIONS

Design for the environment (DFE):

A design concept that focuses on reducing environmental and human health impacts by thoughtful design and careful material selection.

Ecolabel (Type I/II/III):

A mark, seal or written identification attached or affixed to products which provides consumers with information relating to the environmental characteristics of products and thus allows for comparison of environmental performance between products of the same type. Eco-labels can be used to support sustainable purchasing efforts in the form of mandatory custom specifications for market solicitations (e.g. ITTs and RFPs). There are three basic types of eco-labels as defined by the Geneva-based International Organization for Standardization. Type I is a multi-attribute label developed by a third party; Type II is a single-attribute label developed by the producer; and Type III is an eco-label whose awarding is based on a full life-cycle assessment.

Environmental Audit:

A systematic and documented verification process of objectively obtaining and evaluating audit evidence to determine whether an organization's EMS conforms with the EMS audit criteria set by the organization (i.e., ISO 14001), and communicating the results of this process to management. The audit should facilitate management control of environmental practices and assess compliance with policy objectives and regulatory requirements.

Environmental Management Systems (EMS):

A framework for managing environmental issues within a well-documented, organized structure. An EMS can help improve environmental performance, reduce business risks, enhance customer relationships, reduce costs through increased efficiencies and enhance a company's image with employees, regulators, investors, the public and other stakeholders. Establishing an EMS involves complying with an existing standards program or implementing self-defined standards. All EMS models follow a "Plan, Do, Check, Feedback" cycle of continuous improvement.

Environmental Product Declaration:

A description of the aspects and impacts of a product, system or service over its entire life, from raw material extraction, through manufacturing and use, to end-of-life disposal or recycling.

Green Procurement or Green Purchasing:

The selection and acquisition of products and services that most effectively minimize negative environmental impacts over their life cycle of manufacturing, transportation, use and, ultimately, recycling or disposal. Other terms for green procurement include: eco-procurement, environmentally preferable purchasing, green purchasing, environmental product procurement and environmentally responsible public procurement (EERP).

Greenwashing:

Greenwashing is the act of misleading purchasers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service.

Integrated Product Policy:

Integrated product policy is an approach that begins by asking how the environmental performance of products can be improved most cost-effectively. It is founded on the consideration of the impacts of products throughout their life-cycle, from the natural resources from which they come, through their use and marketing to their eventual disposal as waste.

ISO 14000:

The ISO 14000 series is a family of environmental management standards developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The ISO 14000 standards are designed to provide an internationally recognized framework for environmental management, measurement, evaluation and auditing. They do not prescribe environmental performance targets, but instead provide organizations with the tools to assess and control the environmental impact of their activities, products or services. The standards address the following subjects: environmental management systems; environmental auditing; environmental labels and declarations; environmental performance evaluation; and life cycle assessment.

Life cycle assessment (LCA):

Life-cycle assessment (LCA) is a process of evaluating the effects that a product has on the environment over

the entire period of its life thereby enabling the user to make informed decisions. It can be used to study the environmental impact of either a product or the function the product is designed to perform. LCA's key elements are: (1) identify and quantify the environmental loads involved; including the energy and raw materials consumed, the emissions and wastes generated; (2) evaluate the potential environmental impacts of these loads; and (3) assess the options available for reducing these environmental impacts.

Lifecycle costing (LCC):

Assessment of the costs of a good or service over its entire life cycle, allocating total costs —including those traditionally grouped as "overhead" such as waste disposal, training, environmental permitting and waste and water treatment—to the products and processes responsible for generating the costs. This allows decisions about product design, purchasing and manufacturing to be based on a more complete picture of costs over a product's lifecycle. An environmental LCC methodology takes into account the above four main cost categories plus external environmental costs. The latter may come from LCA analyses on environmental impacts, which measure for example the external costs of global warming contribution associated with emissions of different green-house gases. Environmental costs can be calculated also in respect of acidification (grams of SO2, NOX and NH3), eutrophication (grams of NOX and NH3), land use (m2*year) or other measurable impacts.

Lifecycle Management:

Takes the view that products need to be managed throughout design, production, operation, maintenance and end of life reuse or disposal. Product and packaging design (i.e. amount, size, and weight) affect the efficiency and effectiveness of a company's SCL practices and, thus, logistics costs, waste, emissions and energy consumption.

Post-Consumer Recycled Content/Waste:

Waste material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product, which can no longer be used for its intended purpose.

Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP):

Concerns the Research and Development (R&D) phase before commercialization. Enables procurers to create the optimum conditions for wide commercialization and take-up of R&D results through standardization and/or publication and to pool the efforts of several procurers.

Sustainable Purchasing (Procurement):

A management process used to acquire goods and services ("products") in a way that gives preference to suppliers that generate both positive environmental outcomes, and that integrates sustainability considerations into product selection so that negative impacts on society and the environment are minimized throughout the full life cycle of the product. Green purchasing differs from sustainable purchasing as it solely addresses environmental issues.

Sustainable supply-chain logistics:

Explicitly manages the environmental, economic and social impacts of SCL activities; that is, the effective and efficient movement and storage of goods between the points of origin and destination or back again.

Third-Party Certifications:

An assessment carried out to measure the degree of compliance with a specification. Importantly, the assessment is carried out by an independent, third party organization that is qualified and licensed to issue certification when the assessment is successfully completed.

Total Cost of Ownership (TCO):

A financial estimate whose purpose is to help consumers and enterprise managers determine the full range of direct and indirect costs of a product or system.

8 SOURCES CITED

Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN):
www.responsiblepurchasing.org

Industry Canada:
http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/sd-dd.nsf/eng/sd00548.html

National Association of Procurement Officials (NASPO):
http://www.naspo.org/content.cfm/id/Steps_to_Developing

A APPENDIX

Additional Resources - national and international sources of information, standards and sustainable purchasing criteria:

INFORMATION ON GREEN PURCHASING

Environment Canada
www.ec.gc.ca/education/default.asp?lang=En&n=F37DC0B8-1 a

Environment Canada - Green Procurement: Good Environmental Stories for North America, (pdf)
www.ec.gc.ca/cppic/en/refView.cfm?refId=1391

Environmental Life Cycle Management: A Guide for Better Business Decisions
www.ec.gc.ca/p2/default.asp?lang=En&n=BAEAB4C6-1

GREEN PURCHASING NETWORKS

Responsible Purchasing Network
www.responsiblepurchasing.org

International Green Purchasing Network
www.igpn.org

GREENING GREATER TORONTO

TORONTO AND REGION Conservation for The Living City

GTAA Partners in Project Green
A PEARSON ECO-BUSINESS ZONE